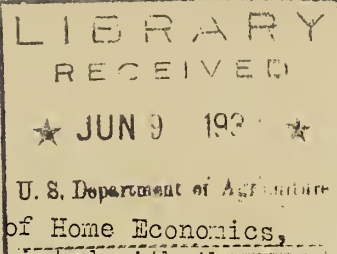


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THE HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR



A radio talk by Rowena Schmidt Carpenter, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered through Station WRC and 35 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, May 16, 1930.

The time for summer sewing has arrived for those of you who make your own clothes or have them made; and for the rest of you who buy things ready to wear, the early sales of cool wash dresses are now at their height. Whether we do our own sewing, supervise it, or merely select our dresses from the shops, there are certain things about fitting that we are wise to study. I feel sure that none of us has escaped having at some time an ill-fitting garment, either bought ready made or made from a pattern. And there is a very good reason for our difficulties in being fitted. Manufacturers have used so-called "ideal" measurements in cutting garments and patterns, obtained by measuring a selected group of persons who seemed to be of average build. Perhaps the individuals selected did not represent the average. Whether that is true or not, certainly many people who use patterns or buy custom made garments differ very much in their physical development from this "ideal average", which has been described by various terms such as "the perfect thirty-six", "junior misses size 17", etc. At any rate commercial firms that are interested in making patterns and clothes are trying now to improve the measurements on which they build them. That will take some time, and meanwhile each of us who must be fitted can study her own figure and know its special needs.

Farmers' Bulletin fifteen thirty, Fitting Dresses and Blouses, published by the Bureau of Home Economics, calls attention to special problems of fitting, and suggests in pictures and in descriptions ways of solving each. Take for example the shoulder line. Some shoulders are sloping, others are square; some are round and plump, others are angular. There is a way to fit each type for comfort and for good appearance. The first step in fitting shoulders is to locate on the figure the normal shoulder seam line, and then to make the adjustment necessary for round shoulders, very narrow ones, or any other type.

Perhaps your special problem is in fitting the neck line. The person who has a very long slender neck needs a different kind of collar or finish at the throat than someone whose neck is short and fat. A collar that fits up close to the neck and is fairly high at the back is good for a long neck but very unsuitable for a short stocky one. Also, it is often necessary to add fullness or to take up extra fullness in fitting the neck. A very great difference in the set of a garment may be effected by taking a few small darts or tucks, or by running a gathering thread to hold in the fullness in the back of the neck. A slight bulge at the neck edge of a garment may be corrected by raising the front at the shoulder seams.

If you are troubled with dresses sliding to the back, often expressed: "Everything rides back on me", then you either have a poorly placed shoulder line, the neck is cut out too large, or the front and back of the garment do not balance at the underarm seam.

(over)

Maybe your problem is one of wrinkles: diagonal wrinkles from the armscye to the neck end of the shoulder seam, horizontal wrinkles at the center front of the neck, or any of the other definitely located wrinkles that spoil the looks of so many blouses. There is a remedy for each.

Listening to the examples I have given, you may have heard none that sounds familiar because your problems of fitting may fall below the bust line. Many a person can buy a pattern or a dress by bust measure and have a perfectly satisfactory fit in the blouse part but a very poor fit in the waistline and hips. This goes back to the fact that many people just do not grow in the way that the established measures have set up as average or even ideal. Narrow hips may go with a plump upper body; narrow shoulders may be over-balanced by large bust and hip measures. And yet often only one size of garment or pattern is offered to these individuals who vary so much from each other in some of their measurements and are alike in other measurements. Sometimes the only satisfactory way to fit the person whose whole figure does not tally with the accepted standards is to cut a foundation pattern, alter it until it fits, and then use it as a guide in cutting all garments in the future, modifying the location of waistline, length of skirt, placing of pleats and flares etc., as fashion dictates.

Farmers' Bulletin fifteen ~~thirty~~ contains in full the suggestions I have given you briefly. I feel sure that you will find it helpful whether you do your own sewing or not, because you will direct your dress-maker or select ready made things more wisely if you recognize the problems of fitting that your own figure presents.

And now I bid you goodbye, Homemakers, until next Friday, when Miss Van Deman from our Bureau and Mr. Davis from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics will tell you how the United States system of grading meats affects you.